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Doing Good recommended from the Example of CHRIST.

A

SERMON

Preach'd for the BENEFIT of the

CHARITY-SCHOOL

IN

Gravel-Lane, Southwark, Jan. 172$\frac{7}{8}$.

To which is added,

An ANSWER to an ESSAY on CHARITY-SCHOOLS,

BY THE

AUTHOR of the FABLE of the BEES.

By *SAM. CHANDLER.*

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ACTS X. 38. Middle clauſe.

Who went about doing good.

WHEN God choſe to give the moſt encouraging deſcription of himſelf to his antient people the *Jews*, he proclaimed himſelf *the Lord God merciful and gracious, long-ſuffering and abundant in goodneſs*. And when he ſent his own Son into the world, that he might appear to be *the brightneſs of his Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon*, the great work committed to his care was, That *he ſhould go about doing good*. And was ever life more uſefully employed? Ever example more worthy our imitation? How can we better learn what will pleaſe God, than from the example of God himſelf, when *he was manifeſted in our fleſh?* Or how can we more effectually ſhew our ſelves to be the diſciples of the Son of God, than by following his example in imitation of his goodneſs?

Goodneſs is the moſt amiable perfection of God himſelf, and that which renders the thoughts of him delightful and pleaſing, even when we view him ſurrounded with the more awful glories of his power and juſtice. And 'tis therefore no wonder that his only begotten Son, when he

came on earth, and condeſcended to dwell amongſt men, ſhould be conſtantly employ'd in acts of goodneſs. Elſe he would have been a Son unworthy of ſuch a Father, and that there would have been juſt reaſon to have ſuſpected his divine original and birth.

To do good is the nobleſt imitation of the beſt Beings. *Judgment is God's ſtrange work*; for he is *ſlow to wrath*, and not *willing of the deſtruction of ſinners*; but waits to be gracious, and rejoyceth over every one, who, returning to a ſenſe of his obligations and duty, renders himſelf a capable and proper object of mercy. And therefore he hath commanded us to *glory* in this above all other conſiderations, that he is the *Lord, who exerciſeth righteouſneſs and loving-kindneſs in the earth, and that in theſe things he delights*, Jer. ix. 24. Now if the beneficence of God, and his great readineſs to do good, is the higheſt reaſon for our rejoycing and comfort, it ſhould be our ambition, as it will certainly be our glory, to copy after ſo fair a pattern, and be conformed to the example of his Son, *who went about doing good.*

Theſe words are a ſhort, but full deſcription of the life of Chriſt, and ſet before us the true nature of that religion he came into the world to eſtabliſh, which can never be better underſtood, than by conſulting his own practice and behaviour. *God anointed him*, ſays the Apoſtle, *with the Holy Ghoſt, and with Power*; and to prove that he was under the immediate conduct of the divine Spirit, and that his miracles were a ſufficient proof of his heavenly miſſion, he urges this reaſon, that *he went about doing good, and*

and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil, for God was with him. All his miraculous works were ſuch as argued his compaſſion and love to men, and that he acted by the authority of the ſupream goodneſs; for God is love; and tho' ſometimes he *anſwers men by terrible things in righteouſneſs*, for the vindication of his own honour and government, and the preventing the entire diſſolution of ſocieties by vice; yet the more common and delightful methods of his providence *are mercy and truth*; and he had much rather perſuade men by the kind yet powerful conſtraints of goodneſs, than terrify and deſtroy them by inſtances of deſerved ſeverity and judgment.

The unwearied goodneſs therefore of our Saviour's life, is an abundant proof that his miracles were wrought by the power of God; and as there cannot be a nobler argument, or ſtronger motive to engage you to all the inſtances of goodneſs, than the conſideration of this amiable example of our bleſſed Lord, I ſhall in ſpeaking to theſe words of the Apoſtle,

I. Briefly repreſent to you our Lord's great benevolence and goodneſs to mankind.
II. Conſider the circumſtances of it, as ſet forth in the text, He *went about* doing good. And,
III. Shew you the influence which this example ſhould have on all his diſciples; when I ſhall conſider the nature and expediency of that particular charity, in which many of you are engaged, the objects of which are here preſent to your view.

I. I am to conſider the great benevolence and goodneſs of our bleſſed Saviour towards men. It was no wonder, that upon his birth, the Angels of God ſhould unite in this ſong, *Glory to God in the higheſt, on earth peace, good will towards men*; ſince the very end of his coming into the world was to do good, to declare God to be reconcileable to ſinners, to proclaim the glad tidings of pardon and divine acceptance, and to engage them to own and receive him as a Meſſenger from heaven, and teach them the way of ſalvation, by the moſt aſtoniſhing works of power and goodneſs: Works not ſo much tending to ſtrike the mind with impreſſions of awe and fear, as was the caſe under the *Jewiſh* diſpenſation, when the thunders, lightnings and voices from the mount were indeed full proof that God was there, but at the ſame time ſo aſtoniſh'd and terrified the people, as made them afraid even of the divine preſence, and to pray, that God would not thus ſpeak to them any more.

Of how different a nature were the miracles of our bleſſed Lord? Extraordinary indeed, ſo as to aſtoniſh all that beheld them, and force them to acknowledge the hand of God; and yet at the ſame time all of them works of compaſſion and goodneſs, ſuch as could not but ſecure the higheſt veneration and eſteem for the great and generous doer of them.

The firſt thing that we read of him was his converſion of water into wine, to add to the merriment and chearfulneſs of a marriage feaſt: A marriage highly honoured by the preſence of the

the Son of God, and enlivened by wine of the nobleſt and pureſt growth, as flowing immediately from his own divine power and goodneſs. And by thus miniſtring in a miraculous manner, to the entertainment of the gueſts, he abundantly prov'd, that tho' he was no friend to the vices of men, he was no enemy to their more liberal repaſts and chearful recreations.

But this, tho' it ſhew'd the great humanity and condeſcenſion of his temper, is not all. The ſcene opens, and brightens to our view. We ſhall diſcover much nobler and richer inſtances of goodneſs than this. If we would form a juſt notion of the extenſive uſefulneſs of his life, we muſt follow him, as healing the ſick, and curing the moſt obſtinate diſeaſes; as ſtrengthening the limbs of the maimed; as having compaſſion on the hungry, and feeding thouſands with miraculous bread; as giving ſpeech to the dumb; as unſtopping the ears of the deaf, and reſtoring to the blind their ſight; as huſhing the ſtormy winds, and calming the raging ſeas; as caſting out devils, and as raiſing up the dead, to ſhew himſelf the Lord both of the living and of the dead.

Such was the great compaſſion of our bleſſed Saviour to the bodies of men, as that he gladly embraced every opportunity of relieving them from miſery, and rendring them chearful, healthy and ſound. And how pleaſing a ſight muſt it have been, to have been witneſſes to theſe glorious works of compaſſion and goodneſs, and to have ſeen the Son of God thus liberally diſtributing his bounty to the needy and indigent? How great the pleaſure, to have heard the dumb

dumb opening his mouth, in thankful acknowledgments to him that gave him ſpeech? To have beheld the blind gazing and aſtoniſhed at the before unknown beauties and wonders of the creation? And the impotent and lame leaping for joy, and praiſing God their healer? Had we ſeen theſe things, which ſhould we have moſt admired, the greatneſs of the power, or the generous compaſſion and kindneſs of him that did them?

But the goodneſs of our bleſſed Lord did not extend to the bodies of men only: He came into the world with a deſign to procure them nobler bleſſings for their immortal ſouls, and *to ſeek and to ſave them that were loſt.* And accordingly we find him addreſſing himſelf, in the moſt affectionate and tender manner to ſinners, and directing them into the ways of ſalvation and peace. *Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you reſt,* was the kind invitation of this Friend and Lover of the ſouls of men. *Whoſoever comes unto me, I will in no wiſe caſt out,* was the glorious encouragement to accept and believe in him, and argued the freedom and extenſiveneſs of the Saviour's goodneſs.

How excellent were the doctrines of his religion that he taught, that by thus ſtoring the minds of the people with the nobleſt principles of knowledge, he might fit them for every good word and work? How divine the precepts of piety and virtue that he delivered? Precepts not enjoining the external and ritual part of worſhip, but the more ſubſtantial things of God's holy law: Precepts that contain the whole of

morality, and take in the entire compaſs of our duty to God and man. And that theſe precepts might have a due influence on the minds of thoſe that heard them, how glorious were the encouragements he ſet before them? aſſuring them, that if they would *receive him, they ſhould have power to become the ſons of God*, they ſhould obtain the forgiveneſs of their ſins, and at laſt be made partakers of a reſurrection to a bleſſed immortality. Such doctrines and precepts as theſe are abundantly ſufficient to eſtabliſh and purify the heart and conſcience; and there cannot be any nobler encouragements and promiſes ſet before us, to raiſe our hopes, and enſure our obedience. How worthy to be admired and loved, was this divine and excellent Perſon, for this his tender regard to the ſouls of men, and his care to promote their eternal ſalvation?

Theſe things repreſent him in an amiable and endearing light, and render him highly worthy of our beſt affection and eſteem. But if we would form a ſuitable notion of his love to and compaſſion for ſinners, we muſt not only converſe with him, as an excellent teacher, as giving the moſt encouraging deſcriptions of God, as mourning over the ingratitude and ruin of obſtinate ſinners, as kindly reproving them for their vices, as counſelling them to return to a better ſpirit and temper, and encouraging their repentance and faith by the promiſes of mercy, and the offers of everlaſting glory. When I think of theſe things, they fill me with an inward ſurpriſe and pleaſure, and lead me to adore the great Author and Finiſher of my faith and hope.

hope. But even all theſe wondrous acts of grace give us but an imperfect view of the goodneſs of this amiable and godlike Perſon. In the laſt ſcene of his life we ſhall ſee richer proofs of his abundant compaſſion to our ſouls. Look on him then as oppreſſed with a load of miſery, that made him *exceeding ſorrowful unto death*; ſubject to reproach and ſcorn, accuſed, ſcourged, condemned by wicked and ungodly men, even by ſinners that he came to ſave. See him nailed to his croſs, and there ſtretching forth his hands, thoſe hands that had ſo kindly adminiſtred to the neceſſities of the poor and miſerable, to embrace and receive us to mercy; pardoning the penitent thief, to ſhew how acceptable the lateſt repentance would be, if ſincere; forgiving his murtherers, and praying for thoſe that dipt their hands in his ſacred blood, and dying, *the juſt for the unjuſt, that he might bring us unto God.*

Glorious death, that thus became the life of the world, and the purchaſe of the moſt valuable bleſſings for ſinners! And was love ever more triumphant and perfect than this of Chriſt's? who when he was on the croſs, looked down with pity on his murtherers, even when they mocked at him, and cruelly inſulted the miſeries he endured, and gave no other return to their ſcoffs and inſults, but to breathe out his ſoul in the moſt ardent prayer to his God and Father, for that forgiveneſs they ſo much needed, and ſo little deſerved; and who, tho' he was cruelly put to death, died only that he might procure for us pardon, grace and everlaſting redemption.

Thus

Thus after innumerable inſtances of goodneſs that he had ſhewn whilſt living, he gave the moſt illuſtrious proof of his goodneſs and love to men by dying, a death worthy his former life, and ſuitable to the glorious character he aſſumed, of being the Meſſenger of God and the Saviour of men. I proceed,

II. To the ſecond general, to conſider ſome particular circumſtances of his goodneſs to men, as expreſſed in the words of my text, he *went about* doing good. This implies,

1. That doing good was the delightful employment and work of his life. It was his meat and drink, both the refreſhment and ſupport of his life. When he conferred benefits, it was not with a ſparing and grudging hand. He appeared peculiarly pleaſed when he had an opportunity of exerciſing mercy, and being ſerviceable to the intereſts of mens bodies and ſouls. Hence we often find him conferring benefits unasked, and ever complying with the firſt requeſts of thoſe that ſought to him for the help they needed. To ask of him was the certain way to receive the bleſſing, and to believe him able and willing to do good, a never failing recommendation to his mercy and compaſſion.

Yea, ſo great was the pleaſure he took in this divine work, that when there were no objects remaining in any particular place, that needed the aſſiſtance of his power and goodneſs, he went to others more remote, that he might find freſh inſtances of miſery and diſtreſs, to whom he might extend his compaſſion and help; a noble proof of the ſatisfaction he took in being the

friend and benefactor of men. And indeed there is no one circumſtance that renders the exerciſe of goodneſs more acceptable and pleaſing to God, or more lovely in the ſight of men, than that it be done with a willing and chearful mind. Herein we have the Son of God for our example. Let it be our ambition to come as near this divine pattern as we can.

2. His going about doing good, implies the large compaſs and extenſiveneſs of his goodneſs. The fame of his mighty works ſpread it ſelf throughout all the regions of *Judea*, and he himſelf followed after to ſhew, that the report was no more than true. He came amongſt men, not to be the Saviour only of a few: Thus to repreſent him is to injure him: But to be *the propitiation for the ſins of the whole world, that whoſoever believes in him might not periſh, but have everlaſting life*; with a benevolent diſpoſition towards the whole race of mankind, in imitation of God his Father, *who is good to all, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works.*

Agreeable to this divine temper, he conferred his benefits wherever he came, and extended his liberality with an undiſtinguiſhing hand. He was touched with a tender feeling of all the miſeries he ſaw others labour under, and all that he required of them, to entitle them to his friendſhip and aſſiſtance was, that they ſhould truſt in his power and goodneſs.

It was for this reaſon that he travelled himſelf, and ſent his diſciples into the cities of *Judea*, that he might become an univerſal benefactor.

For this cauſe he went to the deſarts, the mountains, and the ſea-ſhores, that by drawing great multitudes after him, he might deal forth in a more plentiful manner the bread of life, and have a larger ſcope for the exerciſe of mercy.

Nor have we any ſingle inſtance of his rejecting any perſon, and ſending him away without a bleſſing, that came to him with a well-diſpoſed temper of mind, and was a capable ſubject of mercy.

And the more effectually to ſhew, that he was reſolved to anſwer the declared intention of his coming into the world, *viz. to ſeek and ſave thoſe that were loſt*, he entred into the houſes of publicans and ſinners, and freely converſed with them, nor regarding ceremonial pollutions, that ſo he might become their Inſtructor and Saviour.

He preached the doctrine of the kingdom to the *Samaritans*; cured the daughter of the *Canaanitiſh* woman; and healed the *Roman* Centurion's ſervant, that all might ſee he was no excepter of perſons, but willing to become the common Benefactor and Friend of all nations and people, that would receive him as the Meſſenger of God.

And when there were brought unto him little children, that he ſhould put his hands on them, and pray over them, and his diſciples officiouſly rebuked them that brought them, he ſaid, to ſhew his compaſſionate regard for them, *Suffer little children, and forbid them not to come to me, for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven*; laying his hands on them and bleſſing them.

In a word, as to do good was his delighful ſervice, ſo wherever he went, or with whomſoever he converſed, he ſhewed the moſt beneficent and friendly temper, and made every place, the temple, the ſynagogues, private houſes, fields, deſarts, hills and mountains, ſhips, ſeas, winds and waves, as it were witneſſes to the gracious words he ſpoke, and to the wonderful works of goodneſs that he performed.

3. He went about doing good, implies, the great pains and labour he took in this divine and excellent work. Men commonly think it enough to do good, when perſons in want offer themſelves, and ask their aſſiſtance; and when they are uſeful to others, love to be ſo, at as cheap and eaſy rate as they can, and with as little fatigue and trouble as poſſible. So confined and imperfect is human goodneſs! So little are we touched with the abounding miſeries of others!

How glorioufly doth the goodneſs of our bleſſed Lord excel and outſhine the moſt generous compaſſion of men! How wonderful was it to ſee the Son of God, who could have commanded Angels to his ſervice, travelling about the countries, walking into deſarts, ſubmitting to the fatigues of tireſome journies, and toſſed about by raging ſeas and ſtormy winds!

Well might it be asked, what was the deſign of this *Illuſtrious Traveller*, not to be accompliſhed without ſuch hazard and labour! and well might it be concluded that he came upon an errand, worthy of ſuch great condeſcenſion and pains.

His

His love to men, and his prevailing inclination to do them good, made him ſubmit to this life of difficulty and labour. He was touched with the feeling of their infirmities, and therefore grudged no pain or trouble to remove them, but accounted all his own ſufferings well repaid, by making others happy.

How noble a proof did he give of this in the laſt ſcene of his life! Had he valued his own quiet and eaſe, more than the welfare of mankind, he would never have ſubmitted to ſuch a concluſion of his life; he would not only have prayed, *Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me*, but abſolutely refuſed to have drank up that bitter mixture.

But his love was ſtronger than death, and rather than men ſhould go without that aſſiſtance and mercy they needed, he generouſly condeſcended to all the hardſhips, tortures and agonies of an accurſed and ſhameful death; that by his ſufferings he might bring many ſons to glory, and himſelf become the Captain of their ſalvation.

But to what purpoſe was all this manifeſtation of goodneſs in the Son of God? What, but to give us an example that we ſhould tread in his ſteps. Which leads me,

III. In the third general, to conſider the influence which this example of Chriſt ſhould have upon his Diſciples. Here let us remember,

1. Whoſe example it is that we are called to imitate? No leſs a one than that of the Son of God, him who is the moſt expreſs image and re-

reſemblance of his eternal Father, the moſt perfect likeneſs of that God, who *is good to all, and whoſe tender mercies are over all his works*; of him, whoſe never-failing care ſupplies the wants of angels and men, and who fills heaven and earth with the rich fruits of his bounty and goodneſs.

The example of ſuch a one muſt needs be perfect in its kind. The life which the Son of God vouchſafed to lead, muſt needs be highly honourable in it ſelf, and altogether worthy the imitation of men. His practice the ſureſt direction what courſe of life will be moſt acceptable to the great Author of our natures, and moſt effectually ſecure us his approbation and favour.

How then ſhould ſuch an example both charm and influence us? How ambitious ſhould we be of living as the Son of God did, that we may be well beloved of the everlaſting Father as he was? Great and good examples have ſomething in them very ſtriking and powerful. They naturally excite eſteem and reverence, and warm all the nobler powers of the ſoul into a deſire of imitation. And therefore as there is no example ſo perfect and complete as that of the bleſſed Jeſus, no other pattern of virtue ſo amiable, exact and uniform as his; who can behold it without admiring it, or who admire and approve it, without reſolving and endeavouring to copy after it.

Eſpecially conſidering, that he is our avowed Lord and Maſter, appointed by God to be our Inſtructor and Teacher, made Lord and King over the armies of heaven and the inhabitants of the

the earth, one who hath commanded us to obſerve his ſteps and follow them, and who hath a right to exact the obedience he requires. So that our imitating his example is a matter of unqueſtionable obligation and duty.

As we are profeſſed Chriſtians, we acknowledge the neceſſity of ſubjection to his laws, we pretend to admire the goodneſs and perfection of his example, and to believe and receive all his doctrines as the truths of God. Now for ſuch a Maſter as Chriſt, whoſe laws command us to be merciful, kind and generous, whoſe life was one continued ſcene of the richeſt goodneſs, and whoſe doctrines all of them promote the charitable and compaſſionate diſpoſition and temper, for ſuch a Maſter to have ungenerous, uſeleſs, ſlothful ſervants, of an unrelenting cruel temper, of hearts hardned againſt the miſeries they ſee others labour under, void of all the ſofter dictates of compaſſion, and without a prevailing diſpoſition to do good and be uſeful; oh how high the ſcandal, how deſerved the reproach!

Surely ſuch have never been affected with the Redeemer's love to themſelves. Their hearts have been ſtrangers to every kind and grateful reſentment of his unparallel'd goodneſs, expreſſed to their own ſouls in ſuch a manner, as juſtly cauſes the admiration and wonder of heaven and earth. Otherwiſe the tenderneſs of his mercies would have awakened tender mercies in them, and filled their minds with a compaſſionate regard for the wants and miſeries of others. But,

2. Conſider the nature of the work it ſelf, to which this example ſhould excite you; *viz.* to

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an imitation of God's moſt excellent and amiable work, even to do good; by ſerving the intereſts of the bodies and ſouls of men, as we have opportunity and ability.

It is the conſideration of the divine goodneſs that affords the trueſt pleaſure and delight to our minds. When we view the Deity in the more awful attributes of his nature, his power, holineſs, and juſtice, we almoſt tremble at the glorious proſpect, and our ſouls fall proſtrate in reverence and adoration. But when we conſider him as the Source and Author of good, the Friend of our natures, as having compaſſion on the miſerable, as ready to pardon, and ſlow to anger, theſe reflections give a check to our fears, inſpire us with confidence, hope and truſt, and render him, tho' ſurrounded with majeſty and glory, the delightful object of our eſteem and love.

If goodneſs then be amiable in God, ſhould it not be our care, by acts of goodneſs, to reſemble God? Is there any thing more ſuitable to our natures as men, than to be beneficent and kind? Any thing more agreeable to our profeſſion as Chriſtians, than that we ſhould put on bowels of mercies, kindneſs and charity, which is the bond of perfectneſs? Any thing that yields a more ſincere and laſting pleaſure to the mind, than to be inſtrumental in making others happy?

If at any time, by indulging to intemperate paſſions, by following the dictates of anger, malice and revenge, we have been the occaſions of miſery and diſtreſs to others; if we have injur'd them in their bodies, their reputation, or ſubſtance;

if we have drawn them to, or fixed them in a courſe of vice; how bitter, how unpleaſing the reflection?

But if God hath given me the opportunity, and made me the inſtrument of being ſerviceable to the bodies or ſouls of others: If I have dealt alms to the needy, comforted the dejected, given counſel to him that needed my direction, or been the means of prolonging any perſon's life, comfort, or uſefulneſs, ſuch a reflection ſits eaſy on the mind, ſecures the approbation of conſcience, naturally inſpires with hope towards God, and thus yields the moſt grateful and pleaſing entertainment: An evident proof that our nature is formed for beneficence and kindneſs.

I doubt not but that many of you have reflections of this kind, to be your entertainment and ſupport. The generous manner in which you have already contributed to the neceſſities of theſe poor children, is your praiſe and their happineſs, and makes long exhortations to the ſervice, which the providence of God calls you to this day, entirely needleſs.

I ſhall only therefore add, that in my apprehenſion, the cauſe you are engaged for the ſupport of, is worthy your continued regard; a cauſe that you are ſo far from having any juſt reaſon to be aſhamed of, that you ought rather to rejoyce and glory in it; tho' I am very ſenſible there are objections, which are urged very ſtrongly againſt it.

However, in vindication of this branch of charity, let it be conſider'd, that

Parents are in general inclined to wiſh well to their children, and 'tis a duty which flows from that character, not only to provide for them the neceſſary conveniences of life, but to furniſh their minds with ſuch principles of knowledge and virtue, as may render them uſeful to the ſocieties they are born members of. And if the parents of each family had the capacity and leiſure to teach their children both to read and write, I cannot ſee what detriment this could be in the leaſt to trade, or how it could be complained of as an encouragement to idleneſs and pride, or what right any perſons can have to prevent childrens having ſuch a kind of education, if the parents of them are able and willing to give it them.

That children ſhould be taught to read, is as proper and convenient, as that they ſhould be put into a way and capacity of underſtanding and practiſing their duty; which can never be ſo well known as from the ſacred records themſelves, in which the ſeveral duties of life are deſcribed, and enforced by the nobleſt arguments and motives. And I cannot conceive how the being able to read God's holy word, which contains all the rules and encouragements to virtue, can have any natural tendency to render perſons unfit for or unfaithful in any ſervice of life, any more than the inſtructing them in a particular art or trade, can make them leſs fit to exerciſe and improve therein.

The principles of honour, gratitude, modeſty, ſobriety and temperance, can never be fixed in the minds of children too ſoon: And as the practice of theſe virtues is of univerſal influence

ence and neceſſity, the welfare of ſocieties abſolutely depending on a general obſervance of them, of conſequence the knowledge of them is univerſally needful; and therefore the teaching children to underſtand and read the ſacred records is highly uſeful and commendable; and indeed as neceſſary as any means whatſoever, in order to attain any particular end. For as without any inſtruction at all, 'tis highly probable, that children will imitate all the vices they ſee, and in time grow ripe for every inſtance of villany and wickedneſs whatſoever; ſo unleſs they are able in ſome meaſure to judge of the inſtructions given them, and to compare them with the nobler inſtructions of divine revelation; they may indeed keep free from the lower claſs of vices, but will be in danger of falling into others equally, if not more, pernicious; and if they know too much to be the aſſociates and companions of libertines and profligates, may not however know enough to ſecure themſelves from being the property and prey of the tyrannical and ambitious.

Reading therefore appears highly expedient to attain that knowledge which is neceſſary to render men uſeful and valuable members of ſociety; to preſerve them on the one hand from ſtupidity and ignorance, and on the other from ſuperſtition and bigottry. And indeed every perſon owes this duty to his country and children, to put them into the capacity and method of knowledge and virtue, that they may be ſerviceable in that ſtation of life wherein Providence hath placed them. And if there are ſome parents either ſo ignorant, or vicious, or poor, as that they either will not or cannot teach their

children to read, and know ſomewhat of the principles of virtue; why may not other perſons, who have ability and leiſure, contribute to the promoting ſo good a work? And what difference is there, as to the uſefulneſs of the thing, whether the children be taught at home by the parents, at common ſchools, or in ſchools provided for them by the charity and care of others?

There are ſome conſiderations, from whence it will appear that the poorer ſort of children ſhould be taught in charity ſchools, in preference to any other place whatſoever. The very garments that in ſome ſchools are given them to wear, and their maintenance in all of them by charity, are the conſtant badges and proofs of their dependance and poverty; and ſhould therefore teach *them* humility, and *their parents* thankfulneſs; the frequent contributions made for their ſupport, ſhews them their obligations to their benefactors and friends, and naturally leads them to gratitude and ſubmiſſion; and muſt, if any thing, inſpire them with a deſire to pleaſe, by their faithfulneſs, diligence, and induſtry, that they may not forfeit the protection and aſſiſtance they need in any future ſtation of life. As the inſtructions they receive are the effects of other mens compaſſion and care; one would think the encreaſe of their knowledge ſhould naturally encreaſe that modeſty of temper and behaviour, that is upon every account ſo agreeable to their circumſtances. In a word, as 'tis highly fit and proper that children ſhould be taught to read; ſo we may ſay that it cannot be improper to teach the poorer ſort of them in charity ſchools,

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when their parents have not the inclination or ability to have them inſtructed elſewhere.

'Tis poſſible, and indeed very probable, that ſome of the children thus educated by the charity of others, may, thro' a very bad natural diſpoſition, or the too early influence of bad examples, diſappoint the hopes and care of their inſtructors and friends, and prove either inſolent or ſlothful, or downright vicious and profligate. However, as the knowledge of good cannot be the direct way to evil; nor proper inſtructions to virtue prudently given, and frequently inculcated, have any direct and natural tendency to vice; this is ſo far from being any objection againſt charity ſchools, that 'tis in my judgment an argument in their favour. For if ſome children prove wicked and untoward, notwithſtanding the care taken in their education, and in oppoſition to the better principles they have been inſtructed in; it ſhews how neceſſary it is, that they ſhould be kept from the firſt knowledge and impreſſion of evil, and even in their earlieſt infancy be prejudiced in favour of virtue and goodneſs; nor can there be an inſtance of greater compaſſion to children, or regard to the publick welfare, than to take them for a ſeaſon out of the hands of ignorant or vicious parents, in order to preſerve them from ſtupidity and vice.

The wiſeſt lawgivers in all nations have ever thought the education of children a matter of the higheſt importance to the welfare of ſocieties, and have been ever careful to form their minds into the love of knowledge and virtue, as well as to inure their bodies to diligence and labour.

bour. And the want of ſuch a care is no where more evident amongſt our ſelves; our ſtreets ſwarming with a number of wretches, deſtitute of every thing that is good, without any principles to guard them from the worſt of crimes, ready prepared for the moſt execrable villanies; whoſe ſloth, intemperance and inſolence is not owing to their education in charity ſchools, but to their having never had any good education at all; and were the children of all our poor to be left in the ſame unhappy circumſtances, 'tis evident this evil muſt as naturally encreaſe, and may in time prove as fatal as any bodily diſeaſe may prove incurable, without the timely application of proper remedies to prevent it.

I would not however be thought to vindicate any abuſes that may have crept into our charity ſchools, nor have them ſupported at the expence of the publick good. However I can by no means abſolutely condemn them, nor with a late writer charge the nation with diſtraction and enthuſiaſm merely for their regard to them. *P.* 303. he repreſents it, "As the general "cry, that children ſhould be taught the prin- "ciples of religion, and to read the word of "God, that they may have greater opportunity "to improve in virtue and good morality, and "to be more civiliſed than others." If this be the general cry, bleſſed be God for it; the concern is juſt, and highly becoming good men, and lovers of their country. And if there be any difference in virtue and vice; if a regard to the ſupreme Being be preferable to impiety, and a civilized

Fable of the Bees.

civilized behaviour, to a rude, inſolent and abuſive one, the nation is to be commended for their united endeavours to promote the former, and by all poſſible endeavours to diſcourage and prevent the latter.

To do this writer juſtice, he himſelf allows, that "the meaneſt people ought to be taught "things neceſſary to ſalvation, and the princi- "ples of religion. And this, he ſays, may be "fully done, either by preaching or catechiſing "at church, or ſome other place of worſhip, "from which he would not have the meaneſt "be abſent on *Sundays*; and that the poor with "their children ſhould be made by the magiſtrate "to attend on the ſervices of that day both in "the Fore and Afternoon." I heartily wiſh that the magiſtrates of this kingdom would both by their examples and authority enforce the better obſervation of the Lord's-day. But I need not prove how generally this day is diſregarded by the rich as well as poor; and till he can therefore perſuade the magiſtrates to go themſelves to church, and to bring the poor with their families along with them; private inſtructions to piety and virtue will be ſtill neceſſary; and the education of children in charity ſchools, under proper regulations, a real benefit to ſocieties.

Beſides, as the publick inſtructions in the church are not always intended to promote piety to God, and an univerſal benevolence amongſt men, but an attachment to a party, zeal for ceremonies or unneceſſary ſpeculations, and rancour and hatred to perſons of different ſentiments or practices; why ſhould not the poor, who are

the majority of the nation, have it in their power to diſabuſe themſelves, by ſearching the ſcriptures whether theſe things are ſo or not? The zeal of the mob in foreign nations for popery, and of our own againſt all that diſſent from the national eſtabliſhment, is not owing to their having too much knowledge, but from their having too little; who, if they were duly inſtructed, would have no more ſpleen and malice againſt thoſe who differed from them in uncertain ſpeculations and forms of external worſhip, than againſt others for their different complexions and forms of dreſs.

But he objects, that "as to religion, the moſt "knowing and polite part of a nation have eve-"ry where the leaſt of it; and that we ſhall find "innocence and honeſty no where more general "than amongſt the moſt illiterate, the poor ſil-"ly country people." *p.* 304. And I ſuppoſe the inference from hence muſt be, that there is no need of any ſchools for the inſtruction of poor children in the knowledge of religion. The plain ſenſe of this objection ſeems to be, that the true way to be religious and virtuous, is to be ignorant, illiterate, and ſilly. Or in other words, that religion and virtue are an argument of ignorance and folly; and that wherever there is politeneſs and true knowledge, religion, virtue and innocence are entirely diſregarded. If this was the intended meaning of the objection, it deſerves no anſwer; ſince a regard to virtue and piety is as reaſonable as that men ſhould anſwer the deſign of their being, purſue their true intereſt, and contribute their beſt endeavours to promote the good of ſocieties; and till it can be demon-

demonſtrated, that there is no God, that the pleaſures of ſenſe and time are preferable to thoſe of reaſon and eternity, that men ought to prefer their private intereſt to the publick, and that the honour of ſocieties can be preſerved by impiety and an univerſal corruption of manners; wiſe men will caſt contempt on that politeneſs that is an enemy to true religion, and impute the honeſty and virtue of the country people, not to their want of underſtanding the moſt uſeful principles, but to an happy ignorance or deteſtation of the arts and methods of vice.

Craft hath, it's true, a greater hand in making rogues, than ſtupidity; but then 'tis as true, that others become ſuch thro' mere ſtupidity; and all that are ſo, for want of the nobleſt part of wiſdom and knowledge. Beſides, true wiſdom is as different from craft, as the ſubſtantial gold is different from the baſer metal that reſembles and counterfeits it; and therefore tho' charity ſchools ought to be condemned and abhorred, if they were nurſeries of ſubtlety and craft, they are to be commended and ſupported, if they are real nurſeries of that divine knowledge, that leads to the fear of God, and the avoiding of every thing that is evil.

As to civility and good manners, that by charity ſchools is to be grafted into the poor of the nation, the writer I am arguing againſt confeſſes openly, that he eſteems it to be "a frivolous, "if not an hurtful quality.' *p.* 304. If by civility he means, as he ſeems to inſinuate, mere compliments, and the boys pulling off their hats promiſcuouſly to all they meet, I will allow it to be as frivolous as he pleaſes, and that the coſt of ſupporting charity ſchools is much grea-

ter than the benefit accruing by it; tho' I cannot conceive in what ſenſe, even that can be ſaid to be hurtful. But then this will be an objection only againſt thoſe charity ſchools, where nothing higher or better is taught. If there are others of them, where a civility of a nobler nature is ingrafted into the poor, where they are taught obedience to their governors, gratitude to their benefaors, humility and meekneſs from their own low circumſtances, and an univerſal decency of behaviour towards all men: This I hope will not be accounted frivolous in it ſelf, or an hurtful quality to be grafted into the poor; and 'tis in favour of ſuch charity ſchools as theſe only, that I can in conſcience plead.

His next objection is, that "the maſters of "theſe ſchools are not greatly qualified, and "that they have not much time to teach them "any thing very valuable." But methinks this ſhould be no objection, according to his ſcheme, that where there is moſt knowledge and politeneſs, there is leaſt religion; and that innocence and ſimplicity of manners is moſtly to be found amongſt the illiterate and ſilly; for the leſs the maſters know themſelves, the leſs they can teach the children to know, and therefore there will be the leſs danger of their gaining that knowledge, which he ſo ſadly dreads the progreſs and encreaſe of. The truth is, that the province of ſuch maſters is and ought to be confined. 'Tis not, I ſuppoſe, the intention of the founders and ſupporters of charity ſchools, that the children of them ſhould be bred up in the liberal arts and ſciences; but rather that they ſhould for a while be kept out of the way of vice, and the many temptations to it they would otherwiſe be ex-

poſed

poſed to; and that they ſhould be inſtructed in the common and neceſſary principles of piety and virtue, that ſo they may diſcharge the duties of the lower ſtations of life, for which they are deſigned, with fidelity, and a good conſcience to God and man. And for this ſervice 'tis abundantly ſufficient, that the maſters underſtand only the things they are to teach, and be men of gravity and prudence in their behaviour. To know more might be indeed a pleaſure to themſelves, but of no real advantage to the generality of the children they are to teach.

'Tis further objected, that "charity children, "when from ſchool, are as much at liberty as "other poor peoples children are; and that "therefore reprobate parents cannot have a ci-"vilized offspring, tho' they went never ſo "long to a charity ſchool.' *p.* 305. And I muſt own there is ſomewhat very ſtrong in this objection. However, thoſe children that are ſo unhappy as to have the example of reprobate, profligate parents before them, are more likely to deteſt their parents courſes, or at leaſt to be reclaimed from many of their vices, whoſe minds are guarded every day by proper inſtructions to virtue and piety, than if they were abſolutely left to the influence of ſuch examples, without having any counter principles inſtilled into their minds, to preſerve them from the infection they are ſo much in danger of. And upon this view charity ſchools have their uſefulneſs and ſervice.

I cannot help thinking indeed, that the deſign of theſe ſchools would be better anſwered, if the children could be wholly for ſome years

taken out of their parents hands, and be under the conſtant direction of wiſe and prudent governors. By this ſome vicious habits that may have been early imbibed, would be more eaſily expelled, real faults more readily corrected, and their minds lie more open to the influence of good inſtructions, when they ſhould have no patterns of iniquity before them. 'Tis true, this would be a labour of love of greater expence. But if the number of the children were reduced; if thoſe of ungovernable ſpirits after a proper time of trial, were rejected; if the pooreſt children, and thoſe moſt in danger from profligate and wicked parents, from time to time choſen; and the number always proportioned to the contributions given for the ſupport of the work; then the charity indeed would be as to the number of the children leſs extenſive, but as to the end and deſign of it, much more extenſive and effectual. However if this cannot be accompliſhed, the next beſt thing is, to provide a remedy againſt the encreaſe of the evil, and by principles of honeſty and ſobriety to prevent their utter ruin, thro' the influence of the bad examples they have before them.

Again, further, 'tis objected againſt the neceſſity and uſefulneſs of charity ſchools, that "the honeſt pains-taking people, be they never "ſo poor, if they have any notion of goodneſs "and decency themſelves, will keep their chil-"dren in awe; and that thoſe who will work "themſelves, and have any command over their "children, will make them do ſomething or "other that turns to profit, as ſoon as they "are

" are able; and that ſuch who are ungovern-
" able, no charity ſchool will mend.' *P.* 305, 306.

'Tis true, that ſome childrens tempers are as ungovernable as ſome diſtempers are incurable. But as the one is no argument againſt the proper uſe of medicines, whilſt there is any proſpect of a cure; ſo neither is the other againſt the giving proper inſtructions to children, till they have ſhewn themſelves abſolutely averſe to the receiving them. In many caſes the skill of the phyſician hath been effectual, where the diſeaſe at firſt appear'd obſtinate, and gave little proſpect of recovery; and why ſhould the diſtempers of the mind be judged incurable, eſpecially in children whoſe tempers are pliable, before a proper and charitable trial hath been made to reclaim aud ſave them? Beſides, this argument, if it be good, will prove as ſtrongly againſt the education of children in private families, as in charity ſchools. If they are ungovernable, why ſhould parents make any attempts to reclaim them? What ſignifies it for them to ſtrive againſt the ſtream? But is a naturally obſtinate temper any real excuſe of the parent from endeavouring to amend it? If not, neither is the endeavour of the managers and maſters of charity ſchools for the ſame purpoſe to be condemned; and I doubt not but thro' the bleſſingof God they have, and will oftentimes prove effectual.

But " pains-taking people, if they have any " notion of goodneſs, will keep their children " in awe, and teach them to work." But what if all pains-taking people have not any proper notions of goodneſs? Where is the damage that their children ſhould be taught them? And what

what harm will it do their parents, themſelves, and their country, if they prove better men and women than their parents were before them? Labour and induſtry is not all that is required from reaſonable creatures. This indeed their country demands from the poor. But the demand of God and nature reaches ſomewhat farther. Piety and univerſal virtue they owe to themſelves and their Maker; and with all my heart let them learn from their parents to ſerve their country, by an honeſt diligence, and from their maſters and inſtructors to ſerve their God, and ſave themſelves by piety and virtue.

But 'tis ſaid, that "experience teaches us, "that amongſt the charity children, there are "abundance of bad ones, who curſe and ſwear, "and are guilty of other crimes." *P.* 306. I know my ſelf the charge is too true; and if it be owing to the vices or negligence of the maſters, the only inference that can be drawn is, that better care ſhould be taken, and better maſters provided by the managers. But ſurely a good and prudent education cannot lead to theſe crimes; and therefore they can be no objection againſt thoſe ſchools, where the maſters ſuffer them not to go unpuniſhed, but by proper inſtruction and correction endeavour to preſerve the children under their care from the commiſſion of them.

Another objection againſt the kind of charity, I am arguing for is, that "theſe ſchools are a "nurſery of idleneſs and pride; that every "hour theſe poor children ſpend at their "book, is ſo much time loſt to the ſociety; "and that before they are tolerably verſed in

" reading and writing, they eſteem themſelves " infinitely above thoſe who are ignorant of " them." *P.* 329. I ſhould here properly appeal to you, who are the managers of this ſchool, who have undoubtedly ſome knowledge how the children here have from time to time proved; whether they have been generally humble and ſober, diligent and induſtrious, after they have been placed out in the world; and if you can give a ſatisfactory anſwer in this caſe, the objection will be of no force againſt you.

But to anſwer more directly, as to the complaint of idleneſs; I cannot imagine, how the being inſtructed to read the word of God, which commands the poor to work as they would have bread, ſhould be an enemy to induſtry and labour; or how that time which is beſtowed upon the children to fit them the better for the ſervices of their country, ſhould be all time loſt to their country; and why a boy, that is capable of holding a pen in his hand to write, ſhould contract an averſion to the future labour of the ſhovel or plough, when he knows he is to get his maintenance for life by the diligent uſe of them.

This objection however will have much leſs force, if it was the cuſtom of all charity ſchools, as I find it is of ſome amongſt us, to appropriate ſome part of every day and week, to ſuch labours as are proper for children to be engaged in. There are ſome ſervices may be found out not unfit even for them; and if they were ſome part of their time inured to work, as they are at others inſtructed to write and read, they would not only go out with a greater willingneſs to labour, but might hereby be made to contribute

contribute to their own ſupport, and become real benefactors to the ſchools where they are inſtructed, even whilſt they are in them.

As to childrens growing proud, by being taught to write and read; this might eaſily be prevented by their daily receiving inſtructions proper to their circumſtances, and their having a ſuitable check upon the firſt appearances of ſuch a temper. Undoubtedly pride and ſloth ought never to be encouraged in any, eſpecially not in the children of the poor, who are to maintain themſelves, and become uſeful to the publick, by a modeſt, diligent and induſtrious behaviour. And in order to prevent the effects complained of, 'tis highly neceſſary, that beſides their being taught the common principles of religion in the catechiſm, they ſhould have ſome particular inſtructions proper to their condition, continually inculcated into their minds, and be taught ſuch little portions of holy ſcripture, as recommend labour and induſtry, fidelity and honeſty, modeſty and humility, gratitude and ſubmiſſion, and the like virtues, upon which their future uſefulneſs more eſpecially depends. I know not whether there be any body of ſuch inſtructions drawn up for the uſe of charity ſchools. If not, I am perſuaded 'tis a defect that ought to be ſupplied; and give me leave to add, that if the managers of ſuch ſchools amongſt the Diſſenters deſired this, I am aſſured, that upon their application to proper perſons, ſuch inſtructions would be readily drawn up for them.

But theſe are not the worſt objections yet. The author I am arguing againſt, attempts to prove,

prove, "that charity ſchools, and every thing "that promotes idleneſs, are more acceſſary to "the growth of villany, than the groſſeſt ig-"norance and ſtupidity." If this can be proved, undoubtedly no man that is a friend to virtue, and his country's good, will ever plead in behalf of them. But would not any one expect, after ſuch a charge, that he ſhould have proved, that thefts and robberies have been more frequent and numerous ſince the erection of charity ſchools than before, and that the greateſt part of our malefactors, that yearly ſuffer death, have been boys bred up in theſe charity ſchools? But this he hath not attempted, and cannot prove. Yea, on the contrary, I appeal to the publick accounts of the late *Paul Lorrain*, and the preſent Mr. *Purney*, whether the greateſt numbers of thoſe wretches that die every ſeſſions at *Tyburn*, are not the moſt ſtupid and ignorant creatures, unable to write or read, and void of all the principles of knowledge and virtue. They may indeed be extremely artful and dextrous in their way, and yet their villany owing to real ſtupidity and ignorance; yea, their very improvements in vice may be, and generally are the real effect of their ignorance, or of their having never been inſtructed in the duties they owe to God and man.

If there are any charity ſchools where idleneſs is promoted, or the methods of villany taught or practiſed, or real vices in children ſuffered to go unpuniſhed, I am not arguing in favour of them. But if there are others, in which children are inured to labour, and taught the neceſſary principles to preſerve them regular and

virtuous, I hope ſuch ſchools are not acceſſary to the growth of villany, and the increaſe of our common executions. Yea this author himſelf, after having reckoned up what he apprehends to be the real cauſes of our being peſtered with thieves and robbers, at laſt reſolves it into their *want of principle and education*. "Theſe, ſays he, " are all ſtrong temptations, that conſpire to " draw in the neceſſitous, who want principle " and education, p. 311." In God's name therefore let the poor have principle and education, tho' it be by the charity of others, to guard and ſecure them againſt theſe ſtrong temptations.

I ſhall paſs by all that he urges about the riſe of charity ſchools. For tho' ſome may have ſet them on foot out of mean or diſhoneſt views, I doubt not but that others have ſupported and encouraged them, with no other view, than that of doing good to the children themſelves, and rendring them ſerviceable to the publick.

As to the ſupport of party, which he urges is one deſign of charity ſchools, here I will join all my forces with him, and readily allow that ſuch of them as are managed with this view, are abſolutely pernicious to the common intereſt. On what charity ſchools this charge may be moſt juſtly fixed, I leave to the impartial part of mankind to judge. If the diſſenters are the *poor mimicks* of the eſtabliſhment in their zeal for theſe ſchools, as this author tells us, meanly to court the favour of the eſtabliſhment, I will however tell him, that in their management of their ſchools, they are patterns that 'twill be the glory of the eſtabliſhment to follow. In their ſchools you will hear of the divine right

of epiſcopacy, and the invalidity of all adminiſtrations by perſons not ordained by the regular ſucceſſors of the ſucceſſors of the ſucceſſors, *&c. &c. &c.* of the apoſtles. Would not one laugh to hear children of ſix and ſeven years taught this hopeful doctrine, as an article of faith, and to ſee the managers of ſuch ſchools come *gravely* the next day to ask of diſſenters their contributions to ſupport them? I profeſs I know not which to admire moſt, the zeal or modeſty of ſuch an extraordinary conduct. I ſhall only add, that I my ſelf can name the perſon and place where all this hath been tranſacted.

Did I ſee any thing of the like conduct in the charity ſchools of the diſſenters, I ſhould equally deteſt it. They are managed in a much more chriſtian and generous manner. The catechiſm the children are taught, contains no other articles, but what all the clergy of the eſtabliſhment *ſubſcribe*, and *by act of parliament* are bound to believe. We teach them nothing of the *divine right of presbytery*, nor even inſinuate that *dioceſan epiſcopacy* is not to be found in ſcripture. In a word, we ſcorn to prejudice them againſt any party of Chriſtians, or to breed them up bigots to our own: I wiſh this was univerſally the caſe; where it is not the objection againſt charity ſchools is good, but of no force where it is.

But there is another objection yet remaining, that, I think, deſerves particular conſideration, and which muſt be owned to be of weight, upon the foot on which ſome of our charity ſchools at preſent ſtand. The objection in ſhort is, "That "by reaſon of theſe ſchools, the publick is de-

" prived of many hands, whoſe labour and pains " is abſolutely neceſſary to the welfare, plenty " and defence of our country. And that the " putting out children to trades and handi- " crafts from charity ſchools, is the certain way " to over-ſtock them, and to raiſe up a large " number of poor and indigent tradeſmen, " whereby theſe trades themſelves will be in " danger of being ruined, by an extravagant " demand of wages, and the country work left " undone for want of proper hands to engage " in it." He adds, " that in order to preſerve " a ſufficient number of labouring poor, they " ſhould be kept unacquainted with any thing " but their work, and that to make ſocieties " happy, and people eaſy under the meaneſt cir- " cumſtances, it is requiſite, that great num- " bers of them ſhould be ignorant as well as " poor."

I think I have ſtated this objection in its full weight, and ſhall diſtinctly conſider both the parts of it, what it is he pleads for, and the method he inſiſts upon as neceſſary to it.

I am entirely of his mind, that whatever tends to leſſen the number of labouring perſons amongſt us, and to over-ſtock our manufacture and trade, is extremely pernicious to the publick welfare, it being particularly neceſſary to the ſafety and proſperity of the *Britiſh Iſles*, that there ſhould be a conſtant ſupply of men for our fleets, and for all the laborious ſervices of the country, which ſupply can never be ſecured if charity children in town and country are wholly taken from work, and afterwards put out apprentices to trade. For by this means thoſe

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trades muſt be neceſſarily over-burthened, and not capable of employing the hands bred up to them, and providing them with a ſufficient maintenance. This in the event will produce idleneſs and poverty, and lead on to thoſe farther crimes that charity ſchools are intended to prevent.

I apprehend it neceſſary therefore, not that charity ſchools ſhould be entirely ſuppreſſed, but that they ſhould be brought under regulations, according to the different places where they are erected. In cities and larger towns the children ought to be generally put out to ſuch employments, as near as can be, that probably they would have fallen into, had they never been at charity ſchools. The children of country villages ſhou'd, I think, ſeldom or never be ſuffered to go to thoſe ſchools that are ſet up in towns; leſt by ſeeing the eaſier and more plentiful manner in which tradeſmen live, they ſhou'd get an averſion to low diet and hard labour, and ſo become uſeleſs and loſt to the publick. Such children cannot be too ſoon accuſtomed to pains and diligence, and if they were taught to read only two or three afternoons in a week, and to ſpend the reſt of it in ſuitable work, the end I plead for would be anſwered, and the objection of our author abundantly obviated. And tho' I do not pretend to direct my ſuperiors, yet I humbly apprehend 'tis worth while to look into the ſtate and management of the many charity ſchools, ſet up in almoſt all the towns and villages of *England*, and to take care that the country be not ſtripped of thoſe hands, that are abſolutely neceſſary

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to do the work and buſineſs of it. If this ſhould ever prove the caſe, corn and all other proviſion will neceſſarily grow dear, as our manufactures are at preſent generally over-ſtocked with workmen that want employment and bread, who grow mutinous at their maſters, contract an habit of intemperance and ſloth, and when they can have work will not do it, without inſolently demanding the moſt extravagant wages.

Thus far we ſeem to be agreed; but I cannot help differing from this author, when he tells us, "that to preſerve a ſufficient number "of labouring perſons, they ſhou'd be kept "ignorant as well as poor," unleſs he means ignorant of vice, and all other things that wou'd tend to render them unſerviceable in the lower ſtations of life, in which providence hath fixed them. I ſhould not be againſt their being kept in ſuch a ſtate of neceſſary ignorance. But that they ſhould be kept ignorant of God, and of the principles of virtue, and unable to read a uſeful and profitable book, when their work is over, is far from being neceſſary; becauſe ſuch an ignorance hath not the leaſt tendency to ſecure the end he argues for. Or if it hath, they ought to be kept from every thing elſe that tends to make them grow wiſer, and conſequently from going to church on Sundays, as well as from reading the Bible on week days; which however this writer, in his great compaſſion to the poor, is pleaſed to allow them.

But I would fain know, how the being able to read the Bible, in which the duty of the poor is plainly deſcribed, in which there are a great many exhortations to patience, ſubmiſ-

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ſion and contentment, to induſtry, diligence and labour, and to fidelity in every ſtation and condition of life, can in the leaſt tend to deprive us of labouring poor, or be of any diſſervice to his Majeſty's armies and navies. Would a day labourer work ever the worſe, for having read in the morning ſuch a plain paſſage as this, believing it to be God's command to him, *whatever thy hand findeth to do, do it with all thy diligence and might?* Or his Majeſty's ſoldiers and ſeamen be leſs fit for their ſervice, if they have learnt from God's word, to be afraid of blaſpheming his holy name, and to *be content with their pay?* Surely the poor may learn to read ſuch things as theſe, without any damage to the farmer in the country, or diminution to the number of our ſoldiers and tars. The harveſt would prove never the worſe, nor the buſhel the leſs full, if our ſowers, reapers and threſhers did generally underſtand his will, who provides *bread for the eater, and ſeed for the ſower.* Our ſoldiers would not have leſs courage in ſtorming a town, if they had learnt from the Bible to truſt in God, who gives victory and ſucceſs; nor our ſailors work their ſhips with leſs dexterity for fearing him, *whom the waves and winds obey.* No, ſuch knowledge would inſpire them with the trueſt courage, and the poor in general would ſerve in their ſtations with greater fidelity, if they did it not as *men-pleaſers only, but in ſingleneſs of heart, fearing God.*

I ſhould not have taken this particular notice of the author I have been arguing againſt, but that he ſeems abſolutely to condemn theſe ſchools. Had he argued only againſt the abuſe

of

of them, I ſhould have fallen in with him, and commended his deſign. The beſt things are capable of being perverted, and the nobleſt deſigns ſeldom brought to their true perfection immediately and at once. And as Charity ſchools under proper regulations, may in my judgment be made extremely ſerviceable to the Nation, I have thus argued in favour of them. And after this, I hope I need not preſs you to a generous contribution towards the ſupport of this in particular; but that you will be ready of your ſelves to this ſervice and work of love. The preſent ſtate of this ſchool, as given me, is as follows.

The ſtate of the Charity-School *in* Gravel-Lane, Southwark, *as it now ſtands, the firſt day of* January 172$\frac{7}{8}$.

THE foundation of this ſchool was in the year 1687. The number of ſcholars at firſt was forty, afterwards increaſed to fifty, and now to about one hundred. They are taught to read, write and cypher, and are alſo inſtructed in the Aſſembly's Catechiſm.

It may be ſaid to be the firſt ſchool the Proteſtant Diſſenters were concerned in.

Here objects are received without diſtinction of parties, the general good being intended. It is ſituated in one of the pooreſt parts about the city: and the children of the pooreſt ſort of watermen and fiſhermen, *&c.* are here taught without any expence to their parents.

The charge has been defrayed by the gifts and ſubſcriptions of private perſons; together with the annual collection on this day, at this place, and one in the city.

The managers have been enabled to give the children bibles, teſtaments, and catechiſms, and to place ſome out apprentices to trades. And this year, by the good providence of God, on the truſt repoſed in them by the charity of the contributors, have ſet up another ſchool under the care of a miſtreſs,

a miſtreſs, for learning about twenty younger children to ſpell and read, who when fitted, are taken into the maſter's ſchool for writing and cyphering, and made ready for trades.

Here are ſeveral things to recommend it to your regard.

(1.) Its antient foundation, which the providence of God hath ſupported by the liberality of many, thro' a courſe of many years; and I hope the bounty of former benefactors will excite others to a generous imitation.

(2.) The receiving objects without diſtinction of parties, is another circumſtance, that doth credit to the managers, and ſhould enlarge the compaſſion of generous minds. To contribute only towards the ſupport of a party, is not chriſtian charity, but ſelfiſhneſs and pride. Real charity is, like the divine goodneſs, diffuſive and general; and contributions given towards the ſupport of ſuch a deſign, are well laid out, and will return to the givers with intereſt and advantage.

(3.) The number of the children here educated, claims your compaſſion and pity. One hundred and twenty, many of which probably without this friendly care, would have been ſtupidly ignorant, and been in danger of having become irreclaimably vicious. The care of ſuch a number muſt be attended with a large expence, which expence hath no other ſupply than the willing generoſity of others, and the kind providence of God. Think it your happineſs chearfully to contribute to the happineſs of others, and your honour to imitate the Redeemer in his extenſive and diſintereſted goodneſs.

(4.) By thus doing you ſerve, as I apprehend, the intereſt of your country, contribute to the welfare of theſe poor children; and I truſt alſo ſerve your own moſt valuable intereſt. Every child that ſubmits to the inſtructions given him, that is ſaved from ignorance and vice, that is bred to honeſty and diligence, is a member ſaved to the ſociety, as every child that proves irreclaimably vicious, is a member loſt to the publick welfare. By teaching them the principles of religion, you lay the foundation of future virtue, and by putting the word of God into their hands, and enabling them to read it, you put them into the way of ſalvation, and contribute your ſhare towards promoting their eternal happineſs.

Bleſſed are thoſe children who, under the inſtructions given them, prove faithful to God and men. Their obligation to the providence of God and the bounty of their friends, can never ceaſe. And bleſſed are they who are thus merciful, and lend their help towards the bringing up children for God and goodneſs, for they ſhall obtain mercy. Be ye not therefore ſtraitned within your ſelves, but on this occaſion let every one give according to that which God hath proſper'd him, chearfully, for with ſuch ſacrifices God is well pleaſed. The year thus begun with ſuch an acceptable offering of charity, God may crown with his goodneſs, and cauſe it to end with an abundant encreaſe. For he that ſoweth ſparingly ſhall reap ſparingly; but he that ſoweth with a liberal hand, ſhall have as liberal a return of mercy.

F I N I S.